

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; D. Gamblin, P. Wood, D. Bullock, R. Grant; R. Williams, L. Pritchard, M. Holifield; D. Evans (sub. A. Horseman 88 minutes); K. Searle, S. Perrin.

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: T. More; A. Gibson, R. Coombes, M. Smith, J. Sully, J. Tonn, J. Payne, P. Leakey, P. Green (sub. P. Scott 49 minutes); A. Bass, D. Lawrence.

Referee: J. Martin (Selsdon).
Half-time: 1-0. Goalscorers, Wycombe — Bullock (penalty) 39, Perrin 75.

Actual paying attendance: 1,100.
Approximate total attendance: 1,800.

WYCOMBE Wanderers kept up their challenge in the Rothmans Isthmian League, Division One on Saturday when they raced to three more points at the expense of Bishop's Stortford.

Wanderers are still in second place, level on points with the leaders, last year's champions Hendon, but they have a game in hand. On Saturday they were faced by the fourth placed side, Bishop's Stortford.

Stortford started the game with 21 goals, as many as Wycombe, and had never been defeated at Loakes Park, having won for the past two years. With three new players in their side — Tony Bass, John Payne and Tony Gibson, they presented a severe challenge to the home side.

Wanderers, however, rose to the occasion and produced some superb attacking football. In the second half particularly, they tore great holes in the visitors' defence with fast and accurate passing and could easily have won by a clear four of five.

The Stortford defence, which had looked sound early on, was completely split on several occasions. Centre backs John Still and Martin Smith were made to look slow and lethargic as Keith Searle, Dillon Evans and Steve Perrin powered forward.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the game was the improvement in midfield. Larry Pritchard was back on top form

while Mick Holifield's lightning sprints from midfield almost brought him a couple of goals.

Defensively, Wanderers were again well served by Dave Bullock and Phil Wood. With Bullock taking on giant centre forward Tony Bass, Wood swept up any loose ball inside the area and gave 'keeper John Maskell precious few anxious moments.

bottom wing. He often had the international full-back caught for speed but his dangerous crosses were well cut out by the Blues' defence.

Wycombe's distribution was poor at this stage with Rob Williams in particular tending to waste much of his good work with poor passing. It took 19 minutes to create the first real

Wycombe's goalpower and Stortford were hard pressed to keep them at bay.

Holifield burst onto the scene after 23 minutes when he sprinted at top speed from the half-way line to just outside the box. He powered a left foot shot towards the corner of the net only for Terry Moore to fling himself full length and push the

the spot. With Tony Horseman the substitute, Dave Bullock took the penalty and calmly sent Moore the wrong way.

Stortford brought on blonde Paul Scott for Peter Green early in the second half and only a brave save from Maskell prevented an equaliser after 52 minutes. The 'keeper dropped Lawrence's deep cross and as

Their defence was split time and again as Wanderers surged forward and in the 75th minute, Wycombe scored the crucial second goal that put the match out of reach.

It was the sort of score Wanderers had been threatening throughout the second half. Roger Grant's pass struck John Payne and rebounded to Searle, who sprinted into the Stortford penalty area. He took the ball to the by-line and with the visitors' defence severely stretched, curled over an inch-perfect cross to Perrin. Steve, unmarked, had a simple job of nodding the ball home from point blank range.

Stortford hit back a few minutes later and only a reflex save from Maskell saved Wycombe when Williams almost put through his own net in trying to clear from Peter Leakey.

The action switched to the other end seconds later when Evans almost made it 3-0 and 4-0 but he failed to get a shot in from three yards, delaying too long. A minute later Searle cracked in a shot on the run which Moore could only push away for a corner. From the flag kick, Perrin met Pritchard's cross but his header was blocked on the line by Ray Coombes.

At this stage, Stortford's defence was in tatters. Smith faded completely and virtually all the responsibility was on the shoulders of John Still.

To their credit, the visitors came back in the final minutes and twice almost snatched a late goal. Substitute Scott backed headed just wide from Lawrence's cross and then three minutes from the close Bass rose high and headed another Lawrence cross towards the corner of the net, only for Maskell to save well.

Horseman replaced a tired Evans with two minutes remaining but only had time to touch the ball on a couple of occasions before referee Martin brought the game to a close.

WANDERERS KEEP UP TITLE CHALLENGE

By **STUART EARP**; Wycombe W. 2, Bishop's S. 0

Wanderers made one change from Tuesday's team and a controversial one at that. No doubt many disputed the inclusion of Dillon Evans for Tony Horseman but the move worked well. Evans, although looking slow at times, fitted in nicely and with a bit more luck, could well have opened his account for Wycombe.

The visitors began well with Dave Lawrence giving Derek Gamblin a tough time on the

chance when Bullock's long throw was nicely flicked on by Searle. Evans powered in a header from six yards but the ball flew just over the top.

A minute later Searle also fired over the top after good work by Holifield and Perrin and then a long cross from Perrin was met by Searle full stretch at the far post. Keith timed his run perfectly but the ball crashed into the side netting. The three chances were the first glimpse of

ball away for a corner. It was the first of a string of great saves from Moore, who excelled in the corresponding game last term.

Five minutes later he made another flying stop to keep out Bullock's header but there was nothing he could do about a penalty from the same player in the 39th minute. Keith Searle, running onto Perrin's through ball, was barged down inside the area by Tony Gibson and referee Martin immediately pointed to

Bass swung at the ball menacingly, Maskell dived to save at his feet.

It was a rare attack, however, and Wanderers were soon racing back. Evans and Perrin both going close. Stortford, unlike many teams, gave the Blues plenty of time to set up their raids. Oxford chased and harried all the time on Tuesday but Stortford were prepared to give Wanderers plenty of time and room — and they paid the penalty for it.